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## Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today features three pages of news, plus a full page from the **Australasian Sleep Association**.

## Stress survey

**LA TROBE** University's Health Management team is conducting a study examining the work pressure and emotional labour amongst community pharmacists during the COVID-19 crisis.

Led by Associate Professor Hanan Khalil, the team is seeking the views of how pharmacists are managing stressors during the pandemic.

Participation in the survey is voluntary and responses will be anonymous.

**CLICK HERE** to take part in the survey.

# No support for Victorian pharmacies

**BROTHERS**, casinos and general practices are all eligible to access the Victorian Government's third round of COVID-19 Business Support Fund grants, while many struggling pharmacies are set to be excluded

Pharmacy Guild of Australia Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, described the exclusion of the pharmacy sector from the list of businesses that can access the \$822 million fund as "another backhander" from the Andrews Government.

Through the fund businesses that "must stay closed or operate under restrictions until COVID Normal" will be eligible to access grants of \$10,000 to \$20,000, based on their annual payroll.

"The Guild is angered by the exclusion of community pharmacies from the eligible business list from the third round of business support funding during the COVID-19

pandemic from the Victorian Government," he said.

"In initial discussions with Business Victoria, they have expressed that the latest funding round was being targeted towards businesses that were forced to close as a result of the COVID restrictions.

"However, they could offer no explanation as to why other healthcare providers, including general practice who were able to operate through the pandemic were eligible to apply for the funding.

"This is yet another backhander to the community pharmacy sector from the Victorian Government during this COVID pandemic following advocacy to even have our staff recognised as essential health workers for prioritisation of



results from COVID testing.

"The realisation that community pharmacies are not included as an eligible business to apply for the funding has been devastating for a number of our members who are struggling greatly with the Stage 4 lockdown currently in place in metropolitan Melbourne, some in genuine distress who contacted the Guild earlier this week."

## Guild wants clear evidence on e-cigs

**CLEAR** scientific evidence must form the basis for any moves to restrict access to vaporised nicotine, Pharmacy Guild of Australia NSW Branch President, David Heffernan, believes.

Responding to criticism of an interim decision to amend the current Poisons Standard, proposing to make vaporised nicotine a Schedule 4 drug, Heffernan told *Pharmacy Daily* that the evidence around the safety and benefits of e-cigarettes was "mixed".

"You hear lots of different information from the US and Britain [and] a lot of it's conflicting," he said.

"Ultimately we don't have a

horse in this race...but to date we're not against any future possibilities of it."

"We've accepted some of the science that it may lead to a gateway drug to further addiction to nicotine, but ultimately any health professional or scientist has to weigh up the benefits and risk of this medication.

"[But] there's no doubt that smoking is bad for your health and it's responsible for tens of thousands of deaths every year.

"So if its something that leads to cigarette addiction it's something we'll have to look into."

The Therapeutic Goods Administration is conducting a consultation process **HERE**.

# OPIOIDS: REDUCING HARMS FROM LONG-TERM USE

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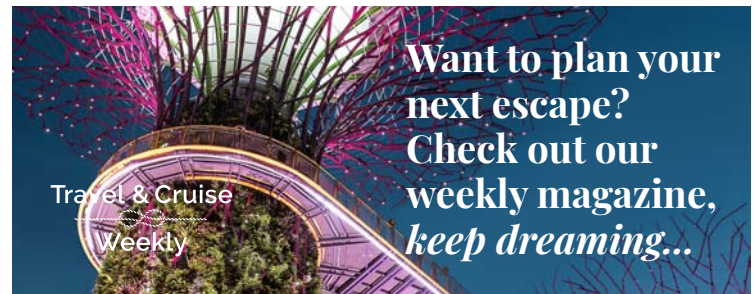
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## Taxpayers gouged on pharmacy rent

STATE and Territory Governments need to act to stop landlords charging unfeasible rents or risk further economic hardship, Pharmacy Guild of Australia NSW Branch President, David Heffernan, warns.

Heffernan told *Pharmacy Daily* that he had been speaking with National Retail Association (NRA) CEO, Dominique Lamb, about the rental crisis facing pharmacists and other retailers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Pharmacy rents are two to three times higher than any other industry," he said.

"Further to that, part of our income comes from the [Federal] Government, and some of these high rents could be seen as gouging the taxpayer.

"Dominique from the Retail Association also agrees that a lot of her members are being gouged, and here we are in COVID where people are seeing foot traffic down by up to 90% in some shopping



centres, and we've got landlords not budging.

"People are just hanging on by a thread - which is JobKeeper - and we both agree that Governments will have to intervene soon because if there's no intervention, if there's no relief there somehow coming from the landlords the Governments may have a mini-economic crisis on their hands.

"That's not saying their don't have one on their hands at the

moment, but JobKeeper is just keeping people together for the time being.

"The landlords can't keep charging the rents they've been charging - it's not feasible and something's got to give."

Heffernan added that the Guild and NRA have been working together to make joint representations to Governments to tackle the rental crisis facing business.

## Join FIP's WPD celebrations

PHARMACISTS around the world are being urged to celebrate World Pharmacy Day (WPD) on 25 Sep, with the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) and the WPD2020 app.

Using the app pharmacists around the world can record and share messages about how the "profession is transforming health" in their country.

"This year sees our 10th WPD," FIP President, Dominique Jordan said.

"We aim to show how pharmacists contribute to a world where everyone benefits from access to safe, effective, quality and affordable medicines and health technologies, as well as from pharmaceutical care services,"

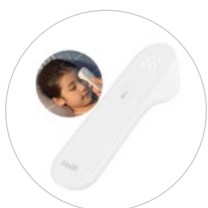
The WPD2020 app is available through the Apple App Store and Google Play.

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## Dispensary Corner

**PHASE** three trials have been approved for African traditional remedies whose proponents claim they can help treat COVID-19.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has published rules for the trials, saying "sound science" would be the only basis on which herbal therapies are authorised.

The move follows claims by Andry Rajoelina, the President of Madagascar, who has been touting a concoction called "Covid-Organics".

The product is made by the Malagasy Institute of Applied Research and is based on the artemisia plant.

Such is Rajoelina's enthusiasm for the nostrum is such that it has even been offered to local schoolchildren for the last four months as a preventative measure.

Despite the availability of the remedy, the *BBC* reports that hospitals in the island nation have been struggling to deal with a surge in COVID-19 cases.

The WHO said the pandemic had "highlighted the need for strengthened health systems and accelerated R&D programs, including on traditional medicines."

## Pharmacy infection control training

**THE** Pharmacy Guild of Australia and Australian Securities Listed (ASX) Registered Training Organisation (RTO) iCollege are rolling out a pharmacy-focused infection control training program.

The training is part of the National Training Fund and is available to all customer-facing pharmacy staff, with funding available in several States and Territories.

Announcing the new partnership, Guild National President, George Tambassis, said the program would ensure pharmacy employees are suitably prepared to deal with the significant challenges confronting them on a daily basis during the COVID crisis and beyond.

"This training will assist you to better understand the minimisation of potential exposure to not only COVID-19, but other infectious diseases and ensure you are prepared to handle any dangerous or community safety situations, as and when they arise," he said.

"The *Infection Control Skill Set* training, which can be accessed through GuildEd, has been prepared jointly by the Guild and iCollege, and covers standard operating procedures already in place in community pharmacies.

"We are delighted to work with iCollege on this initiative and have made every effort to customise the training to ensure it meets the standard operating procedures and protocols that should be utilised

in the operation of a community pharmacy."

The deal has exposed a number of apparent divisions within the sector, with a *Pharmacy Daily* source who did not wish to be named saying they had concerns over the tie-up with iCollege.

The source claimed one of iCollege's subsidiaries, Celtic Training and Consultancy Pty Ltd had been removed from the RTO's scope of registration in Jun 2019 by the Australian Skills Quality Authority, while a number of iCollege courses were suspended in Jun this year.

"This Guild iCollege partnership leaves students exposed to low quality training," the source claimed.

However, iCollege Executive General Manager, Stuart Manifold, told *Pharmacy Daily* the issues



around non-compliance were linked to courses that iCollege had inherited through acquisitions and were not being taught.

Manifold added that as an ASX-listed entity iCollege was subject to greater scrutiny than non-listed RTOs, and the pharmacy infection control program is a high quality program.

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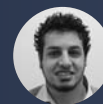
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Todd Marion, Pharmacist and Co-Proprietor, Kiama Pharmacy NSW



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